

# EPTA UK

Piano Teacher Talk – your quick update on what’s going on in EPTA

## Key dates to note:

### ABRSM-EPTA

#### Teacher development

#### days:

27 January, 24 February,  
31 March, 2 June, 30  
June, 21 July at  
Chetham’s School of  
Music in Manchester.

**EPTA** is delighted to  
highlight these brand  
new development days  
supported by **ABRSM**  
**£100 for each day, £80**  
**for members of EPTA UK**  
**and £50 for students.**  
**Reduction to £500 if all**  
**six days are booked.**  
Contact [admin@epta-](mailto:admin@epta-uk.org)  
[uk.org](http://uk.org) for further  
information and for  
securing your place on  
this course.

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Dear Piano Teachers

Welcome to our fourth online newsletter!

**Looking back, Looking forward: EPTA UK at 40**  
A message from Murray McLachlan, Chair EPTA UK

At this incredibly busy time of year for all musicians EPTA UK has much to celebrate and look forward to. Celebrations for our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary continue apace: Last month’s inspirational and vibrant masterclass with our joint patron Angela Hewitt at King’s Place in London was a memorable and highly stimulating evening. Angela’s remarkable artistry and generosity of spirit energised the four performers (all past winners in the EPTA UK piano competition) giving them so much to think about, ponder over and develop. Huge thanks to Angela for making time in her incredibly busy schedule. We are also grateful to Pianist Magazine for sponsoring the EPTA birthday cake, and to Jaques Samuels Pianos for providing the beautiful Fazioli Piano.

*Please send us feedback, news and ideas for teaching and piano playing on our EPTA Facebook and Twitter pages or on the Pianodao site. We are very grateful to Andrew Eales for featuring the newsletter on Pianodao.*



## Would a Piano Teaching Booster Day rejuvenate your teaching?

Low cost?

Packed with ideas and inspiration?

Delivered by some of the best music educators and teachers in the UK including Paul Harris, Murray McLachlan, Mark Tanner, Rowan Cozens, Helen Krizos, John Holmes and Anthony Williams.

Check out the ABRSM/EPTA Teacher Development Days detailed below - pick just one day or all six. If you do all six you can also take the CertEPTA or DipABRSM teaching qualification.

All are held on Sundays at Chetham's School of Music in Manchester.

Date	Description
<b>January 27th</b> <i>Offer cost: £80</i>	<b>New Year! New Ideas - The Inspirational Teacher</b>
<b>February 24th</b> <i>Offer cost: £80</i>	<b>Spring Inspiration - The Effective, Consistent Teacher</b>
<b>March 31st</b> <i>Offer cost: £80</i>	<b>Easter Energiser - The Clear-sighted Teacher</b>
<b>June 2nd</b> <i>Offer cost: £80</i>	<b>Mid-year motivator - Towards a more Personal Approach</b>
<b>June 30th</b> <i>Offer cost: £80</i>	<b>Summer Teaching Sunshine - The Flexible, Empathetic Teacher</b>
<b>July 21st</b> <i>Offer cost: £80</i>	<b>End of term reflections – The Dynamic, Motivational Teacher</b>

### ***Which Piano Teaching Booster Day is just right for you?***

Contact us on [admin@epta-uk.org](mailto:admin@epta-uk.org) 08456 581054

To book follow this link [www.epta-uk.org/catalog/event-booking](http://www.epta-uk.org/catalog/event-booking)



## **ABRSM-EPTA Teacher Development Days**

2019 will bring new initiatives and events- not least of which is the six new ABRSM-EPTA days at Chetham's School of Music: We are thrilled and excited to announce this new series of development days for piano teachers of all levels for 2019, supported by ABRSM. The six days will prepare participants for the new CertEPTA as well as the DipABRSM teaching diplomas, as well as giving everyone who attends a deeper understanding of piano technique, improvisation, composition, simultaneous learning, sight reading and quick studies. In addition, there will be musical analysis as well as support and guidance on child protection and managing your teaching practice. At only £80 per day for EPTA members and £100 for non-

members (students can come for £50) value for money is an understatement for this series of six days that promises to be not only inspirational but also highly practical and useful for teachers and pianists of all levels and interests.

[To book your place click here](#)

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## **Beyond Dynamics- Making Melodic Lines Sing**

**Murray McLachlan**

Slow, reflective and lyrical pieces are important from the earliest stages of development onwards. Finding a way for pupils to make melodic lines 'sing' in this repertoire can prove challenging if too literal an approach is made to dynamic markings on the score. If there is a generic marking of 'piano' at the beginning of a piece the temptation is to play all the notes quietly. Unfortunately, this can prove disastrous. We should always remind young players that music relates to art- just as a picture has perspective, with one figure or object retaining greater focus than others, so too does musical composition. If you are playing a piece marked 'piano' which has three elements in its texture- melody, bass and middle ground quaver figurations- it makes sense to project the melody at a stronger dynamic level than the bass, which could be played at a stronger dynamic than the middle ground quavers. To play the three elements of the texture at 'piano' would lead to a lack of definition for the melodic line, which could be approached at 'forte', with the bass as 'piano' and the middle ground as 'pianissimo'. Playing the piano involves constant multi-tasking, and it is only by juggling dynamic markings and simultaneously coping with two or more different sounds that it is possible to allow melodic lines the strength and independence they need in order to soar and project with expressive conviction. Of course, strength is not enough- we need beautiful shaping and exquisite tone- but that is for another day.



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## **What makes a good lesson? (a student perspective)**

**Karen Marshall**

Have you ever asked your student what makes a good instrumental lesson? A number of years ago I did just that in a secondary school. There was a whole class full of students of different ages, learning different instruments with a variety of teachers. Their feedback was enlightening. Here are the main themes, the messages I believe are still valuable. Whilst revising this, from a personal perspective, it was a useful reminder to ask and listen more to the needs of my students and to think more creatively - especially when teaching sight reading and scales.



So, what did they say ...

### **I want to like my teacher and my teacher to like me**

“The teacher needs to look like they are enjoying teaching me.” “I like my teacher to smile at me.”

### **I want my lesson to be varied and creative**

Variety was constantly mentioned. “Some teachers do the same things every week.” “I want every lesson to be different and learn something new.” “I love it when I can do some great improvisation in my lesson.” “I don’t like to play pieces for too long – sometimes I get really sick of my exam pieces.”

### **I don’t enjoy my lesson as much if I haven’t practised – I want to be able to show progress**

“I enjoy the lesson more if I can demonstrate the progress I have made through my practice.” “I don’t want to go to my lesson as much if I haven’t really practised.”

### **I want it to be pupil- led**

Comments include: “I want my lesson to be relevant to me.”

### **I want to play music I like and that isn’t too hard**

“I want to play music that I really like and things that I’m familiar with. I don’t mind doing the classical stuff – I like some of it, it’s just I don’t want to do it all the time. I want a mix.” It was regularly mentioned that finding time to practise was a struggle with everything else they did – this was particularly applicable to secondary aged students. They only wanted a small amount of difficult music as they said their time was limited. They didn’t feel like even starting practice if it was all hard work!

### **I don’t like doing scales or sight-reading in my lesson – I like aural and gaining knowledge about my pieces**

Scales and sight-reading were not popular activities in lesson time although students were happy to sight read disguised as duets, ensemble pieces and using technology. The popularity improved with higher grade students. Scales were seen as okay if used to improvise but many students said they found them boring and their least favourite element of a music lesson, they preferred to just get on with them at home, rather than as they saw it “wasting precious lesson time.” Aural and theory were more enjoyed when linked continually to their pieces as long as sight singing wasn’t included. Boys in particular expressed feeling ‘a bit stupid’ sight singing. Students’ enjoyed displaying their skills if they were confident with the activities and theory was seen positively again when taught integrally. “It’s boring just working through the work books.”

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### **EPTA Fellowship Melvyn Cooper**

Professional EPTA members Nadia Lasserson and Susan Bettaney have been awarded Fellowship of EPTA UK for their outstanding contributions over many years to the association. They accepted their awards at



the 40th EPTA Birthday celebrations on the 15th November. Presentation was made by EPTA joint patron and international pianist, Angela Hewitt.



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## Repertoire showcase

There is a lot of core repertoire available to us as pianists. EPTA's website has an enormous amount of pieces listed, with the recommended grading. Why not take advantage of this excellent facility if you are looking for something new and stimulating to offer to your students. Here's this month's selection, suggested by Amy Wakefield.

- Grade 1 - Tarantella (from Piano time pieces 2- Pauline Hall)
- Grade 2 - Cloudy Day- Christopher Norton
- Grade 3 - Unicorn (from Stars)- June Armstrong
- Grade 4 - Toccata- Kabalevsky
- Grade 5 - Luskentyre Lullaby- (from A Hebrides Suite)- by Donald Thompson
- Grade 6 - Rhythm-a-catta- Dennis Alexander
- Grade 7 -Ballade no. 2- Fazil Say,
- Grade 8 - Ritual Fire Dance- Manuel de Falla
- Post grade 8 - Ginastera- Danzas Argentinas (complete)